

## The 1939 Register

(from <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/1939-register/>)

The 1939 Register, taken on 29 September 1939, provides a snapshot of the civilian population of England and Wales just after the outbreak of the Second World War.

The records were used to produce up-to-date population statistics and identification cards and, once rationing was introduced in January 1940, to facilitate the issuing of ration cards. Information in the Register was also used to administer conscription, and to monitor and control the movement of the population caused by military mobilisation and mass evacuation.

The 1939 Register is a useful resource for family, social and local historians. As the 1931 census for England and Wales was destroyed by fire during the Second World War and no census was taken in 1941, the 1939 Register provides the most complete survey of the population of England and Wales between 1921 and 1951.

Whilst the 1939 Register is not a census, it is arranged along similar lines and includes similar, if less detailed, information.

Individuals' records remain closed or information in them redacted for 100 years from their date of birth (the 100 year rule) or until proof of death is verified (see section 7). Some online search results of the register will have a number of blanked out lines, indicating *closed records* of individuals deemed to be alive. As more records are made public under the terms of the 100 year rule, they will be made available to search and view online at [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk).

### ***Use in the BHTA project.***

*The largest part of the BHTA WW1 project has been to trace the lives of those who served but did not die during World War 1. We did this because the contribution of the survivors is often forgotten but was nonetheless vital. This is not an easy task as most ordinary people lived largely undocumented lives. We have often managed to trace marriages, birth of children and whether or not a person continued in their pre-war trade or changed jobs.*

*The latest census information available under the 100 year rule is 1911. The post-war information generally comes from marriage, birth and death records, often by actually acquiring the certificates from the General Records Office to check details, particularly occupations and addresses. The Electoral Rolls, limited by showing only voters' names and street, for 1921-31 can show if someone stayed in Bingham during that time. Interrogating the 1939 record generally requires knowledge of where the individual was living, hence our use of the record is mostly limited to people who were still in Bingham at that time. Sometimes we have been successful in finding people who left the area. A bonus is that the register is a household record, i.e. it lists spouses and children as well as their occupations, subject to the 100 year rule.*